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ABSTRACT

The proposed form, content, and funding of South Africa's second television channel (TV2) are examined in this paper. Noting that the service is designed for the country's black majority population, the paper points out that it is nonetheless controlled by the white-dominated South African Broadcasting Corporation. Following a brief outline of the history of television in South Africa, the paper discusses the unique problems underlying TV2, such as the possible role it can play as a propaganda vehicle for the existing political order of the nation and the difficulties of broadcasting to a multilingual audience. The paper then examines four possible effects TV2 might have on black society: (1) a complex, differential effect; (2) no effect; (3) the effect of accelerating existing trends in society and opening new ones; and (4) the effect of narcotizing and then mobilizing society. Of these four effects, the paper holds that the complex, differential effect is the most likely predictor of TV2's impact on black South Africans. (FL)

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International Communication Division

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# TV2 -- THE INTRODUCTION OF TELEVISION FOR BLACKS IN SOUTH AFRICA

On January 1, five years after the introduction of a "White" service, South Africa will launch a television service for the country's approximately 20 million Blacks.[1] TV2, as the Black system is known, is unique for several reasons--the main one being its context of an apartheid, White-dominated society.[2] Although described by the South African authorities as a system for, and run largely by Blacks, TV2 will undoubtedly remain firmly in White control. The Afrikaner-dominated South African Broadcasting Corporation, which will act as midwife and nurse for the Black service, will retain control over all aspects of the service: recruiting and training of staff, program content and preparation, financial matters, and so on.

Some of the questions arising from the imminent arrival of TV2 are asked wherever television arrives in developing societies: What impact will the service have on the political and economic aspirations of a largely poor society? How will a commercial service change consumer spending patterns? What opportunities exist for educational use of the system? How will social life in particular and the society in general be affected by the new system?

But with TV2, an additional set of questions arises out of the system's unique South African context. For example, what kind of ideological considerations underlie TV2? And how is it ultimately possible for anyone's values except those of the White management to dominate the service? As a government agency, what unique credibility problems could TV2 encounter among the Black audience for whom it is intended? Or, from the point of view of those opposed to the South African government, what kind of threat might the service be as a propaganda tool of the Pretoria administration. given the South African Broadcasting Corporation's past record in its radio and White TV services?

Referring to the introduction of TV1 in South Africa, Harrison and Ekman

say South Africans held four alternative hypotheses about its possible impact. One was that TV would have no effect on an already unfolding political future. Another was that TV would accelerate existing trends and open up new ones. The third was that TV may prove to be more "narcotizing than mobilizing" on the population. Finally, they mention the "complex, differential impact" hypothesis, which suggests that "television's effect will be pervasive, but that in some areas the medium will stimulate change while in others it may inhibit and divert."[3]

Whether or not it applies to TV1, this last hypothesis seems most accurately to describe the probable impact of TV2. Based on what little evidence is currently available, the overall effects of the new service indeed seem likely to be pervasive, complex and differential. Each of the other three hypotheses could also be said to have at least some likelihood of being correct.

As a whole, though, TV2's probable effects on South African society seem likely to be best described by the differential effects hypothesis. Given the inevitably speculative nature of this paper, the evidence to support this stance must be tenuous at best. Nonetheless, this approach will serve as a useful framework for analyzing various facets of this yet-to-be-launched service.

An overview of TV2's historical and social context and its proposed format will reveal the main economic, political, racial and socio-cultural parameters within which the service will operate. Some of the key implications these factors raise are then discussed.

## Historical and Social Context

It could be said that television in South Africa has a far shorter history than its "non-history." When the country introduced its service for Whites

in 1976 it belatedly joined the rest of the developed world. Several reasons account for South Africa's late introduction of television. These are described well elsewhere,[4] and no more than some of the main points need be listed here. Harrison and Ekman say "the pros and cons of television were perhaps more thoroughly debated (in South Africa) than in any other adopting society."[5] They describe the main factors underlying this delay as political, cultural and economic.

Long opposed by the country's Nationalist government, TV drew a wide range of objections to its introduction. Government supporters feared TV would serve as a vehicle for propagating American and British culture, at the expense of the Afrikaner and his identity. It was feared the medium would unleash an "uncontrollable flood of 'foreign' ideas, Western 'decadent' thought as well as Eastern 'communist' ideologies."[6]

Opponents of the government, by contrast, feared the Pretoria administration would use a TV service for unashamedly ideological ends as a propaganda vehicle that would serve the National Party first and the country second.

Other objections were that television simply "wasn't needed," and that the expense of the service did not warrant its introduction. Also, questions were raised about the form a service ought to take, if it were to reflect the country's cultural and linguistic heterogeneity.

This long "non-history" of television continued until the late 1960's. The moon-landing in 1969 led to widespread disgruntlement among white South Africans, who saw themselves as being the only group in the free world unable to witness this event on television. Their protestations, as well as political changes that saw the demise of TV's staunchest opponent in the cabinet, provided the climate for the government to appoint a commission of enquiry about the future of television. This 12-member body delivered its report in March 1971, calling for the introduction of a TV service for Whites. It also called for another, but separate, service to be introduced for Blacks as a follow-up

to this bilingual (English and Afrikaans) service for Whites.

The service for Whites commenced trial broadcasts late in 1975 and officially began operating in January 1976. But whatever firm plans the SABC had for Black television had to be shelved, mainly for financial reasons. The minister concerned finally announced in October 1979 that this service would begin operating in January 1982.

The proportion of South African Blacks currently owning television sets is roughly 2%, although viewership is considerably higher: in 1979 13% of Blacks said they had viewed television during the previous month, compared with 93% of the Whites.[7] In the same year, 9% of all adults saying they had seen television within the past day were Blacks. The figures for other groups were Whites--69%; Coloreds (mixed race)--14%; and Asians--8%.[8]

This, then, is the brief historical background to TV2. But what is the broader socio-political context into which the service comes? What are the roles of the media in general and broadcasting in particular in South Africa?

Formal pre-publication censorship does not exist in South Africa. Nor are the news media formally consored after publication (or broadcasting, as the case may be). But numerous laws and other restraints serve in effect to limit greatly the scope of South African and international affairs on which the country's media may freely report. The media generally operate within a uniquely South African set of constraints. The most prominent of these are the law, with limitations placed on the coverage of defense and prison matters, for instance; monopoly, as with the government-run radio and TV systems; economic constraints, whereby large capital requirements in effect prevent Black newspaper ownership, while allowing four major White press groups to dominate the country's newspaper business; and the informal intimidation of journalists, in the form of detention without trial, passport withdrawals, or

even occasional physical beatings.[9]

It is no coincidence, critics of the South African government argue, that the media have largely--if not totally--come under government control. As Seiler puts it, the central fact of South African political life is "the effective domination of all political institutions by Afrikaner nationalism."[10] The National Party, which has governed the country since 1948, effects a fine balance in its dealings with the press. The government keeps it subdued enough so that it will not threaten or hamper a government-determined status quo, while giving it enough leeway to criticize so that many outside the country still refer to the South African press as the freest in Africa.[11] Indeed, the extent to which the English-language opposition press has criticized the government in the past has made it the most effective White opposition within in the country, replacing even the traditional parliamentary opposition forces, argues Potter.[12]

The government's own press, by contrast, was founded as an arm of the National Party and continues to speak either as an official or unofficial voice. The Afrikaans papers have during the past decade attained an increasing independence of government, but they nonetheless remain among the most influential and powerful institutions the National Party uses to retain its support among Whites.

The country has 25 major daily and weekly newspapers, about half of them English and half Afrikaans. The English language papers have higher circulations and although they theoretically cater specifically to a White audience, several now have more Black readers than White. All the English papers are anti-government, except one. All the Afrikaans papers are pro-government. The country's only major Black daily, Post, was forced out of existence in January 1981. This paper, and a weekly--Sunday Post, succeeded two other Black

papers, The World and Weekend World, both banned in October 1977. The company publishing these four papers, the White-controlled Argus group, has now launched the Sowetan. A weekly named after Soweto, the large Black satellite city adjoining Johannesburg, it is likely to take a less critical stance than its predecessors, which frequently angered the government with their criticisms.

Writing even before Post and Sunday Post were closed, Hachten argued that "a Black press as such hardly exists in South Africa today. Almost all the estimated 200 to 225 Black journalists now active in South African journalism work on newspapers owned and controlled by White publishing organizations."[13] "The Black press," he added, "which had flowered earlier in this century, has been systematically pruned and cut down by official repression"--a remark given further credence by the events of January.[14]

Both radio and TV1, being close mirrors of government opinion, have paralleled the Afrikaans papers as de facto proponents of the policy of separate development. Speaking specifically of television, Hachten commented three years after TV1 began that the service "is used as a propaganda instrument to espouse the political goals and aspirations of Afrikanerism. The government . . . keeps a firm hand on news and public affairs reporting, avoiding what it considers the distortions of the English language press. Views opposing the government are largely ignored."[15]

Radio Bantu, the broadcasting service for Blacks, transmits SABC programs in seven languages. The roots of this multilingual approach ultimately go back to the government's policy of separate development. SABC policy in this regard clearly mirrors the government's stress on preserving what it sees as the traditional cultural heritages of the various ethnic groups comprising the South African population. Critics charge that this policy is calculated more to promote the wider ideology of apartheid ("separateness") and continued

isolation among these Black groups along "divide-and-rule" lines.

Tomaselli and Tomaselli discuss the ideological role of Radio Bantu even more critically. Describing it as an "ideological apparatus," they say "it mediates a coherent apartheid based reality which underlines the importance of ethnic values linked to a linguistic system rooted in tribal imagery."[16] The system is further used, they say, to promote the benefits of capitalism over other politico-economic systems. The communication of any ideological alternatives to apartheid are carefully excluded from Radio Bantu program content, they say, and conclude that the main purpose of the service is to prepare mainly urban Blacks ideologically for their role in White-controlled South Africa. This, they predict, will also be the case with TV2: "There is no doubt that this service will concentrate on preparing a numerically limited group of Blacks for their social roles as labor units in 'White' South Africa."[17]

Despite a well-documented enthusiasm for Radio Bantu--or at least for part of its programming, significant numbers of Blacks have also said they regard the service as a propaganda vehicle of the Pretoria government. A 1975 survey indicated that a fifth of the Black population viewed it in this light.[18] And, expressing concern from the perspective of the advertising community, an ad agency head said in 1980 that research was revealing a heightened anti-Radio Bantu stance, especially among youths who saw it as a government mouthpiece. He added: "Something similar could happen with Black TV."[19]

This question of TV2's credibility forms the focal point of much of the following discussion. For the moment, though, it is significant to note that the climate of political hostility and division which has long marked South African race relations provides a unique setting for TV2's introduction. Some implications of launching this White-initiated service, within the general framework of a policy widely rejected by Blacks, are discussed later.

## TV2's Format

South Africa's service for Blacks will have several similarities to the existing service for Whites. Both will broadcast for limited periods each day; both will be commercial; both will broadcast in at least two languages; both services will rely heavily on license fees to supplement revenue from advertising; and both will initially aim at the country's urban areas. The kinds of equipment used will also be similar. TV2 is obviously modelled largely on the existing system.

Government Controlled: Like TV1 and the services of most European and Third World countries, TV2 will be officially controlled--by the South African Broadcasting Corporation. The SABC is a body established by parliament, and is responsible to it. The Corporation controls all South African radio and television broadcasting.

The government is providing initial funding for the service, but only to the extent of about $40 million. The additional needs, estimated at more than $90 million, must be met by the SABC itself.[20] It will thus depend heavily on advertising to fund TV2, using revenues from both the existing and the new services. To provide the SABC with immediate cash, the proportion of air time on TV1 allocated to ads was raised from 5% to 5.75%. This increase is expected to provide about $12 million annually, which will be applied directly to TV2.[21]

The other major source of revenue for TV2 will be license fees, as is the case with TV1. The annual fee of about $40 applies to both monochrome and color sets. (Average earnings for Blacks in non-agricultural sectors of the economy were R1,589--about $1,826--in 1978; for Whites, the figures were R6,792, or $7,811.[22]) Projections regarding initial sales of TV sets to Blacks can hardly be accurate, as those keenly concerned with possible sales and the likely reach into the Black community, both the SABC and the advertising community, have little hard information to rely on. And although viewing is likely to be considerably higher than ownership, given the economic status of most Blacks and the

likely emergence of strong communal viewing patterns, making projections about actual revenues from license fees seems a hazardous exercise.

The advertising agencies looking ahead to TV2 have two major concerns about the service. The first relates to the system used on TV1 to allocate ad space to clients, a system which will also apply to TV2. Clients have limited say in the actual place their ads will fill, beyond somewhat broad time slots. Also, since the SABC undertakes to provide at least 12 30-second spots each year to any prospective advertiser, the bigger clients simply have to be satisfied to share what is left of a limited number of available slots. The system has led to much disgruntlement among advertisers, leading one agency to comment that the SABC had always tried to be fair to all. But "in trying to make everyone happy, (it has) pleased no-one."[23]

The second concern relates to the language requirements the SABC has placed on advertisers: the ads must be in either of the two language groups comprising each day's viewing. Since such a step poses serious obstacles and costs for advertisers, many have argued in favor of a Black service broadcasting in English, the lingua franca of urban Black South Africa. The costs of preparing an ad in Zulu and then having to repeat it in Tswana, say, would be enormous, advertisers argue, in addition to their charge that it is unnecessary.

Language: TV2 will have, like TV1, a bilingual service. The older service alternates its programming between a chunk of English- and Afrikaans-language content. Similarly, TV2 will alternate its program content between not just two languages but in fact between two language groups: the Nguni languages (Zulu and Xhosa) and Sotho (Northern and Southern Sotho, and Tswana). More than 90% of Blacks living in Soweto, South Africa's largest Black city, speak one of these five languages.[24]

However, the same survey on which these figures are based also indicated that although 56% of those polled said they understood Zulu (the Black language

most commonly spoken at home--37%), 79% understood English. Suggestions from various quarters that English be the language of a unilingual Black service have had no impact on the planners of TV2, however. Their policy of multi-lingual broadcasting has its roots in the activities of the Black radio network, as described earlier.

Another major consideration for avoiding English as the lingua franca of Blacks on TV, radio or elsewhere in South African society, is the country's official commitment to "equal time" for the two official languages of Afrikaans and English. Many Blacks regard Afrikaans with varying degrees of dislike, associated as it is with "the oppressor." The compulsory use of Afrikaans in Black schools in fact helped trigger the 1976 unrest in Soweto, such was the unpopularity it had among Black youth. So, if South Africa's Afrikaner government were to introduce a TV service for Blacks broadcasting in Afrikaans, it could expect far-reaching resentment. Offering such a service with English language programs only, on the other hand, would constitute a severe embarrassment. Such a move would conflict with its fundamental policy of preserving ethnic groups' cultural heritages, but it would also constitute an extremely painful emotional exercise for a people whose history saw a long and bitter struggle with English rulers to obtain equal treatment for their own tongue.

In terms of government policy then, the Afrikaner-dominated SABC has little option but to vote for a multi-lingual approach to TV2. Taking the approach several multi-lingual countries in Africa have embraced, of using English or French as a "neutral" medium favoring no indigenous group, simply is not possible in South Africa: choosing either English or Afrikaans, or both, obviously causes more ideological and political headaches than it is worth.

Broadcast Times: The hours of transmission are hardly ambitious, at least by American standards. Mondays to Fridays will have three hours of programming in the early evenings. Saturdays will have double that amount, boosted by sports programs. Sundays will also have three extra hours, part of it for

religious services. Total weekly broadcast time is thus 27 hours. Such limited hours are obviously dictated by a concern not to promise more than the programmers can supply.

Commercials: The service will have commercials from the outset, accounting for 8% of air time. This contrasts with the figure of 5.75%of air time allocated to ads on TV1, an increase from an initial proportion of 5%. The amount of time which either service may allocate to ads is controlled directly by parliament, to whom the SABC reports each year on its broadcasting activities.

But SABC officials stress that the service, like TV1, is not a commercial service as such. A primary concern is high standards and meeting the cultural requirements of Black viewers, not to "seek maximum audiences at the cost of lowering program standards or narrowing the spectrum of appeal."[25]

Audience: Logically enough, TV2 is to be broadcast initially to the country's major urban areas, where a majority of South African Blacks now live. Five transmitters will initially broadcast from five cities--Johannesburg, Pretoria, Cape Town, Durban and Port Elizabeth--and will reach an estimated 70% of the potential audience in these areas. The single largest area is Soweto, with a population officially estimated in 1980 to be 864,000, although unofficially thought to be as high as 1.2 million.[26] The service is clearly aimed at an urban audience, at least initially, for several reasons. Not only is it easier to transmit programming to these densely populated regions, but this audience also consists of the more sophisticated and affluent Blacks who are more likely to watch TV, buy or rent sets, and have the spending power sought after by the advertisers who will largely underwrite the service.

Details on the expected size of the audience are not yet available. At least two studies are being conducted to derive estimated audience sizes, so that initial advertising rates can be established.

Program Content: One of TV2's greatest difficulties is securing enough program material. Because of the SABC's commitment to using indigenous Black languages, rather than English or even Afrikaans, as the medium for TV2, all programming must either be produced locally or else be imported and then dubbed. Of course, the same applied to the Afrikaans programs of TV1. In this case though the SABC could draw at least partially on a relatively well established local film industry that had been making Afrikaans films for several years. Film making for Black audiences in South Africa, especially in the vernacular languages, is at no more than minimal levels. Also, the subject matter of many imported European TV programs readily lent themselves to dubbing into Afrikaans. Clearly, this will apply far less to programs for TV2.

The head of TV2, Theuns van Heerden, expects much programming to be imported from the United States, Britain and Europe.[27] And noting that Afrikaans audiences soon got used to the strangeness of Frenchmen or Germans speaking fluent Afrikaans, he expects Blacks will similarly easily adjust to hearing JR plotting and scheming in Zulu in a dubbed Dallas series. (Dallas, together with High Chapparal, Chips and Taxi were among the favorite programs viewed on TV1 by Blacks surveyed by a Johannesburg advertising agency.[28])

Van Heerden believes the large number of locally produced programs will constitute a great boost for Black actors, playwrights, musicians and other artists. TV2 advertised for nearly 1,000 positions in 1980, and received some 8,000 to 9,000 responses.

Besides dubbed American TV fare such as Dallas, what else can TV2 viewers expect? Two news programs each evening, of 15 minutes and 25 minutes respectively, will rely on TV1 for their material but will be presented by Black announcers. Sports and music will feature prominently, even to the extent that Van Heerden expects Whites may switch to TV2 for this kind of entertainment. He regards this as an area in which the two channels will compete for viewers. Other programming

will consist of drama, entertainment, cultural affairs, religion, and other topics that will help to meet what Van Heerden describes as the service's overall purpose: to inform, educate and entertain. He adds though that despite the probably limited appeal of some programs, the SABC is committed to catering to a wide range of interests rather than drawing the largest possible audience at all times.

By his own admission, Van Heerden expects the service to be weakest in the area of production because of a lack of experience. He points out that TV1 could recruit from abroad to get necessary staff, an option not open to TV2. Everything dealing with training of staff has been the service's responsibility, with one partial exception. To some extent it could draw on staff at Radio Bantu, in the same way that TV1 tapped the ranks of experienced English- and Afrikaans-speaking radio broadcasters.

Of the nearly 1,000 personnel TV2 will hire, about a third will be directly involved in programming, Van Heerden says. Of these, he estimates that "99%" will be Black. Only the most senior posts will be held by Whites, he adds.

As indicated earlier, TV2 has had no difficulty attracting potential staff. Van Heerden expresses satisfaction with their overall calibre. And although he regards a lack of experienced personnel as a significant problem, he is convinced that "we've got the material." Having been with Radio Bantu since its beginnings in 1960, Van Heerden says he expects Blacks to do as well in working with television as he says they learned to do with radio.

Another dimension of programming difficulties is the language question, discussed in the previous section. The need for multi-lingual programming will undoubtedly strain the service's limited financial and human resources. In common with the Afrikaans programs produced by TV1, none of TV2's productions will be available for resale without dubbing, as the channel's languages are unique to South Africa. And, worse still, the likely market for Black South African TV

productions is of course the rest of Africa--countries that can often ill afford anything but the cheapest of American soap operas or situation comedies. More significant though is the political question: such is the hostility with which almost all of Black Africa presently regards White-governed South Africa that a boycott of something as public as TV programming is a sine qua non. Similarly, much though they might welcome the revenue, few if any African countries can be expected to supply program material to TV2; the price of political ostracism from the rest of Africa is simply too great.

Well aware of the difficulties of running a service catering to five languages of two language groups, TV2 is committed to splitting into separate Nguni and Sotho services as soon as possible. Two separate services could quite likely be sustained by the kind of advertising volume that television is likely to draw; already there are indications from advertising agencies that TV2 will be unable to supply the space their clients will want.[29]

Economic Factors: Two considerations can seriously hinder TV2's attempts to reach an audience worth selling to advertisers on the one hand, and justifying its own financial outlay on the other. These are, how many urban Blacks can afford to buy or rent TV sets, and even for those who can, will the non-availability of electricity prevent them from doing so?

Although it has risen dramatically in the past decade or so, the per capita income for South Africa's urban Blacks is still about only one fifth of that for Whites. Even those Black households with an above average number of income-earners generally have nowhere near the kind of discretionary spending that mark the great majority of White families. As a result, the ability of Blacks to buy even the cheapest monochrome sets, which sell at about $200, is severely limited.

Several options are open to makers of TV sets. One is producing cheaper sets, a move made possible by an easing of the standards the government

required of manufacturers in TV's beginning days. Another is relying much more on rentals, and several businesses have begun exploring ways which would provide Blacks with sets without requiring what for them may be a large capital outlay. One scheme which was tested involved payment on a time basis: a charge of 50 cents for every 150 minutes of viewing.[30]

The other problem concerns the availability of electricity in a city like Soweto, obviously the largest potential audience for TV2. Estimates regarding the number of homes which now have access to electricity in Soweto vary considerably, but an accurate one may be 14.6%[31] Plans are being implemented to boost this number greatly in the next few years, but the question remains: will enough of those wanting a set have the means to power it? (Introducing battery-run sets, even if only as a stopgap measure, remains a possiblity, although it is unclear either how well these would work or how popular they may be.)

Hardware: The transmission system on which TV2 will rely is identical to that of TV1. Studios are located in Pretoria and Johannesburg, and several outside broadcast units will also be used. These units are to be located in Durban and Port Elizabeth, as well as Johannesburg and Pretoria, to supplement the studio facilities in these two cities.

Having waited longer than almost everyone else before introducing their initial television service in 1976, the South Africans were able to shop around and take advantage of some of the best equipment available. Some critics in fact charged that the service was unable to realize the potential of the best that Europe and the United States could supply. Limited operating budgets and woefully inexperienced staff led to a host of stories of incompetence behind the scenes, as well as an excruciating array of on-screen blunders.

TV2 can expect similar problems in using the even more up to date equipment it is buying. Complaints that little imagination and excessive bureaucratic interference with TV1 program ideas have led to often dull viewing, could well

arise with TV2. Unless the right mix of capable and imaginative producers, and an equally competent staff of technicians and actors, are available, and receive warm support from management, all the best intentions brought to TV2 may come to nought.

## TV2'S Possible Impact

Given the context in which TV2 will start broadcasting next year, what are some of the implications the service has for South African society? Among the most important are political issues, many inherent in the question, "Whose values will TV2 reflect?" The answer, say the service's planners, is those of the Blacks themselves. Not so, say some critics, Black and White, of the government. They charge that TV2 will reflect the values of the White, Afrikaner status quo. Presenting this view, Tomaselli and Tomaselli note that the service "is controlled and organised by an exclusively White management."[32] Inevitably, the SABC can be expected to keep close control on both the general direction and specific program content of TV2, run these predictions--and in a way that will effectively serve as Pretoria's mouthpiece to the nation. Judging from various studies of SABC's radio and TV operations, a distinct, persistent, and at times unabashed pro-government bias is the norm rather than the exception in program content.[33] And a Johannesburg advertising agency researching TV2's introduction noted that "Respondents tended to feel that Black TV would be used to disseminate propaganda."[34]

The fears that TV2 will similarly become an ideological tool are not without foundation. The touchstone by which these fears will be measured is program content. Will programs discuss the kind of issues Blacks themselves see as central to everyday life? It is hard to imagine a talk-show or panel discussion with participants criticizing government policy on Black education, urban housing, discriminatory job laws, influx control, and so on. It is harder still to imagine such volatile content as regular fare on TV2. Far more likely, judging again from the content marking the White service, a play-it-safe approach seems sure

to prevail. Commenting after a year of TV1, an Afrikaans TV critic lamented that programs reflected "a notable lack of discussion of South Africa's pressing social, racial and political problems. Tackled by an Afrikaans newspaper on (this) criticism, the SABC replied: 'We have nothing to say at this stage.' Will it ever? Or will it constantly dodge the big issues?"[35] Many would say nothing has changed since.

In fairness, TV1 has touched on some controversial issues during its five years of existence. Yet the scales tip so heavily in favor of a conflict-avoidance approach to programming that a similar stance can readily be expected on TV2.

But many expect that TV2 will not merely try to avoid controversy; it will, they predict, actively promote National Party ideology. John Rees, director of the South African Institute of Race Relations, says Blacks regard TV2 with great suspicion, fearing it will be an "indoctrination service."[36] While he recognizes TV2 could have a major positive role to play in South Africa, he believes "the government has already shown its hand by appointing all Whites to head the service."[37] By doing this, Rees and others argue, the government has seriously undermined the service's credibility even before it starts. As a segment of South Africans, presumably including the great bulk of the Black population, regard anything stemming from the government with the attitude "Can anything good come from Pretoria?", TV2 must inevitably be viewed in the same light--even before broadcasting its first program.

Even government opponents like Rees acknowledge that the number of Blacks likely to translate such suspicion into an actual boycott of TV2 is small. The novelty of the service will undoubtedly make it highly attractive to its potential audience. Rees, for one, is concerned that the service would be hard to resist and would prove "an irresistible temptation for young Black viewers" in particular.[38]

Government critics fear that TV2 will present much sport, music, comedy,

light drama, and other 'diversionary' viewing, at the expense of material addressing the more substantive and serious problems facing South Africa. Expressed differently, these critics are concerned that the world TV2 portrays will be far removed from the problems of discrimination, unemployment, lack of education and poverty--issues dominating the lives of the bulk of South African Blacks. Instead, they are anxious that the service play a 'developmental' role in South Africa, however this is defined. The prospect that TV2 may offer no more than 'mere entertainment,' according to this view, is seen as being wasteful at best and manipulative and diversionary at worst.

Thus, such critics are also concerned that TV2's content will actively and persuasively promote the merits of the government's separatist policies. This view reflects the fear that TV2 would distract viewers from their situation, so lending support to Harrison and Ekman's 'narcotizing' hypothesis.

Weighing against this, however, are the economic realities facing TV2. For whatever commitment TV2's planners may have to Pretoria's racial policies, they will need to balance specifically ideological (and hence potentially unpopular) content against the need to sell an audience to advertisers. This audience, overwhelmingly urban, is far less ethnically oriented than the rural communities whom TV2 hopes to reach only later.

Another major political question arising concerns the effect TV2 might have on Black identity, a key aspect of which is ethnicity. Whatever trends exist in urban Black areas towards a lessening emphasis on ethnic identity, government policy officially goes in just the opposite direction. Many Blacks, especially urban ones, insist on regarding South Africa as a single political entity, while government policy calls for the constitutional development of the country's various Black groups to full 'nationhood.' This policy has already led to independence for three 'homelands,' but urban Blacks in particular reject it as a 'divide-and-rule' strategy by the White government.[39]

These two opposite forces, social pressure against the preservation of ethnicity and official actions intended to foster it, lead to something of a schizophrenia in contemporary urban Black South Africa. TV2 will, on balance, have to favor one or the other of these two directions. And if the net effect of the programming is to promote a more homogenized, non-ethnic urban Black society, whatever the intentions of TV2's planners, this would be in direct opposition to the government's basic philosophy. On the other hand, programming might discourage Blacks from seeing themselves as "South Africans" rather than as Zulus, Xhosas, Tswanas, and so on. If so, this would run counter to the existing trend toward non-ethnicity in urban Black politics. So, whichever of these two main trends TV2 helps promote (and it seems unlikely to have a merely neutral effect), the 'differential impact' hypothesis tends to be supported.

In practice, of course, TV2's impact is unlikely to be simple and unequivocal on attitudes towards ethnicity, especially since a range of attitudes towards the issue exists among urban Blacks themselves. The effect TV2 will have on urban Black attitudes toward ethnicity is thus likely to vary considerably, making the "differential impact" hypothesis even more plausible.

TV2's programming may not be as blatantly pro-government as some may fear. Yet the very fact that it will originate in Europe, Britain, the U.S. or the SABC's own studios means it will surely reflect a largely capitalist and Western world view -- values which TV2's intended audience by no means accepts unquestioningly.

On the contrary, the question of "selling capitalism" to South Africa's Blacks--or at least to enough of them to form a sizable middle class -- has emerged as a distinct ideological issue in recent years. Many White South Africans, even those opposed to the government, have urged Pretoria to help establish a middle class committed to South Africa's capitalist economy.

Government critics, however, see this move to create a Black "buffer" group as yet another "divide and rule" tactic intended to undermine Black political forces in their quest for fundamental change in South Africa, change which many Blacks believe necessitate a move towards a more socialist economic system.

Capitalism clearly has had a bad press among many urban Blacks. A series of focus group discussions held by a Johannesburg advertising agency found that most urban Blacks aged 18 to 40 felt as follows: "Capitalism was associated with greed, selfishness and exploitation rather than with the definition of a capitalist, namely someone who goes into business for himself, which we fed into the groups to get reaction. Even if Capitalism might offer some benefits, these were for Whites."[40]

Although not the most immediate of its implications, the role TV2 will play in promoting a capitalist system which has questionable support from South African Blacks remains a fundamental issue. Were it not for the negative context in which capitalism operates in South Africa, it could readily be argued that Harrison and Ekman's hypothesis that TV would accelerate existing trends and open up new ones would have most validity about capitalism's future. All indications are that TV2 will play a significant role in hastening the incorporation of Black South Africans into the country's consumer economy. But this is not likely to be an unqualified development, as we have seen. The strong reservations felt towards capitalism will surely complicate TV2's overall impact. Again, the probability of complex and differential rather than simple or uni-dimensional change seems most probable.

The service will presumably affect the life of South Africa's urban Black community at various levels, for example, in the preparation of programs, their viewing, and the effects this viewing will have. So, an extensive impact on the ranks of Black writers, actors and producers is likely. Many

thespians will take advantage of the new opportunities TV2 will bring. For others, though, the question of possible censorship or other kinds of limits on expression may redefine their perceived roles as artists. As announcers and actors gain popularity, they will undoubtedly emerge as celebrities in Soweto and other urban Black areas.

In a society with relatively low incomes, extensive communal viewing is likely to arise as groups of friends and family members gather in homes or institutions. Also, an entrepreneurial spirit may emerge as a 25 or 50 cents a night "viewers' fee," or whatever the market will bear, becomes a standard way of getting friends and family, and perhaps strangers too, to help redeem capital or rental expenses. Existing leisure activities and visiting patterns could undergo drastic changes. TV sets will become new status symbols. And, if programs are popular enough, emptier township streets at night could lead to a lower crime rate in Soweto and similar urban areas.

The service will presumably boost the economic well being of a small group of Blacks. No doubt the advertising industry will spawn an elite group of well remunerated Black models. Black actors and announcers will probably attain a wider visibility in the community, if not a comparable financial standing. (The SABC has never been known for generous salaries.) Economic spinoffs in commerce and industry could also see an upsurge in jobs for Blacks in marketing and sales.

Job-related economic considerations will affect only a small proportion of South African Blacks, however. The major impact of TV2 will probably be on consumers. Advertising to Blacks is currently done mostly via Radio Bantu and newspapers. As Black discretionary spending grows, a commercial TV service can be expected to give a substantial boost to the retail sector of the economy.

This sector of course includes the overwhelmingly White TV manufacturers and retailers. According to an estimate in February 1980, South Africa had about 180,000 TV sets--a figure predicted to rise to 385,000 by 1983. The bulk of this 100,000 increase "is expected to come from the Soweto market."[41]

Educationally too, the service will undoubtedly play a major, if informal, role in Black society. Van Heerden has even described the service as a kind of "university of the air."[42] Indeed, he sees education as one of the service's main objectives. On the question of using the service for more formal educational purposes, however, he says TV 2 will be open to whatever initiatives come from the government department responsible for Black education. He adds that he sees the channel specifically as a vehicle for educational purposes.

Inevitably, the question of ideology again arises: what kind of education, whether formal or informal, will TV2 provide? Yet again the answer is likely to come in 'complex, differential' terms. As with the various other possible areas of change, educational influences of TV2 seem highly unlikely to be simple or uni-dimensional.

## CONCLUSIONS

The introduction of a television service for Blacks in South Africa in 1982 is likely to accelerate the already prominent westernizing tendencies present in the Black urban community. Speaking on the likely effects on the Black community of their own service, Tom de Koning, Rand Afrikaans University Professor of Communications, said: "The greatest effect on the Blacks will be the raising of their cultural aspirations. They will see other Blacks with cars, houses and so on and ask, 'Why can't I have that?' In a real sense there will be a 'westernization' of Blacks because of television."[43]

And, especially significantly in the South African context, he adds that "their political claims will escalate as a result."[44]

Quite how TV2 will play a politicizing role is unclear, yet there seems little doubt that it will. It could readily be linked to economic considerations, such as the continued incorporation of South Africa's Blacks into the country's consumer economy, and a possibly corresponding emergence of a Black middle class.

Cultural, sociological and educational changes are likely to be far reaching. But here too the possible effects of TV2 can only be predicted broadly, because of the inherently speculative nature of this paper. Just what will change in Black South African life, and to what extent, is impossible to say. How these changes will be accommodated within the existing society is even more difficult to predict at this stage.

But the available evidence, judging from TV2's context and proposed format, suggests that the service will have a complex and pervasive impact in various areas of South African life. According to Harrison and Ekman's fourth hypothesis, "in some areas the medium will stimulate change while in others it may inhibit."[45]

Most likely to be stimulated are economic, social and educational values, as well as some political aspirations. Depending on TV2's ideological content, some other political values may be inhibited or diverted.

But whatever the overall impact TV2 may have in South Africa, the unique socio-political milieu in which the service will operate makes predicting its role a hazardous and complex task. Precisely because of this complexity, the introduction of TV2 constitutes an unparalleled case study for mass media students. Neglecting the rich range of research opportunities that TV2 offers would be cause for considerable regret.

Notes

[1]Population figures for South Africa are often given in two ways: including and excluding the three "homelands" which have already become constitutionally independent of Pretoria, but have been recognized by no other country. The estimate of 20 million includes Blacks in Bophuthatswana, Transkei and Venda (a total of about 3.4 million, according to a mid-1978 estimate). The provisional 1980 South African census results gives the number of Blacks in the rest of South Africa as 15,970,019; Whites as 4.5 million; Coloureds (mixed race) as 2.6 million; and Asians as 794,000. (South African Institute of Race Relations: Survey of Race Relations in South Africa: 1979, Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 1980, p. 70; South African Digest, September 19, 1980, p.3.)

[2]While the new service is called "TV2," its predecessor was not in fact "TV1." Rather, it was known simply as "SATV" (South African Television). For the sake of simplicity, however, the original service will be referred to in this paper as "TV1."

[3]Randall Harrison and Paul Ekman: "TV's last frontier: South Africa," in Mass Media Policies in Changing Cultures, ed. by George Gerbner, New York, John Wiley & Sons, 1977, p. 196.

[4]See for example, Randall Harrison and Paul Ekman, op. cit., pp. 189-196; Liesel Drury: "Television in South Africa: the reasons for its late introduction," MA thesis, University of Illinois, 1976; Peter Orlik: "Southern Africa," in Broadcasting in Africa, ed. by Sydney Head, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1974, pp. 140-151; and Trevor Philpott: "The end of an innocent age?", The Listener (London), July 8, 1976.

[5]Harrison and Ekman, op. cit., p. 190.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Grey Matter, published by Grey-Phillips et al, Johannesburg, June 1980.

[8]Mediagram, published by J. Walter Thompson, Johannesburg, July 4, 1980.

[9]For a more detailed discussion of these constraints see for example Elaine Potter: The Press as Opposition (Totowa, New Jersey: Rowman & Littlefield, 1975); and Frank Barton: The Press of Africa: Persecution and Perseverance (New York: African Publishing Co., 1979).

[10]John Seiler: "The Afrikaner Nationalist Perspective." In: Bissell, R. E. & Crocker, C. (Eds.): South Africa in the 1980s (Boulder, Colorado; Westview Press, 1979), p. 3.

[11]Barton, p. 218.

[12]Potter, ch. 3.

[13]William A. Hachten: "The Black Journalist in South Africa." Paper presented to the Association for Education on Journalism conference, Houston, 1979. p. 1.

[14]Ibid, p. 6.

[15]William A. Hachten: "Policies and Performance of South African Television." Journal of Communication, 29:3 (Summer 1979), p. 63.

[16]Keyan Tomaselli and Ruth Tomaselli: "Mass communication and the dissemination of apartheid ideology." Paper presented to the Association for Sociology in Southern Africa conference, Maseru, Lesotho, June 1980, p. 24.

[17]Ibid, p. 25.

[18]Ibid, p. 24.

[19]Sunday Tribune, January 6, 1980.

[20]Rand Daily Mail, March 19, 1980. In fact, the total operating expenditure for TV2's first five years is expected to be about $235 million, with revenues of $124 million. The remaining $111 million must be funded by the government ($41 million) and the SABC itself ($70 million). (Rand Daily Mail, April 26, 1980.)

[21]Interview with Miss Trudi du Plooy, Department of Communication, University of South Africa, Pretoria. August 1980.

[22]Survey of Race Relations in South Africa: 1979, pp. 193-194.

[23]Media Bulletin, published by Grey-phillips, Bunton, Mundel & Blake (Pty) Ltd., Johannesburg, October 17, 1980.

[24]Mediagram, op. cit.

[25]Media Bulletin, op. cit.

[26]South African Digest, September 19, 1980, p. 22.

[27]Interview with author, July 1980. Subsequent remarks by van Heerden are taken from this interview, unless noted otherwise.

[28]Gray Matter, October 1980.

[29]Media Bulletin, September 25, 1980.

[30]Sunday Times, February 17, 1980.

[31]This figure is based on the Johannesburg area as a whole. It is significant to note that comparable figures for the other main metropolitan areas are, with one exception, somewhat higher: Cape Town: 51.2%; Port Elizabeth 51.0%; East London: 21.5%; Durban: 4.3%; Bloemfontein 15:4%; and Pretoria, 85.5%. (Grey Matter, October 1980.) Nonetheless, Soweto remains the main target audience, having the largest and most affluent population. A recent government statement indicates that Saweto may now be fully electrified as early as 1983.

[32]Tomaselli adn Tomaselli, p. 25.

[33]See for example Hybels, Sandra Kay: "News and editorial bias in the SABC" PhD dissertation, University of Michigan, 1971; and Orlik, Peter: "The SABC: An historical survey and contemporary analysis," PhD dissertation, Wayne State University, Detroit, 1968.

[34]Grey Matter, October 1980.

[35]Financial Mail, January 28, 1977.

[36]Interview with author, July 1980.

[37]Rees interview.

[38]Rees interview.

[39]Black opposition to the government's homeland policies was cited by a judicial commission as one of the contributory factors leading to the unrest that occurred in Soweto and elsewhere in South Africa in 1976. The Star, March 8, 1980.

[40]"A window on their world." Bates, Wells, Rostron. Johannesburg, 1980(?), p. 19.

[41]Sunday Times, February 17, 1980.

[42]Evening Post, January 29, 1977.

[43]Financial Mail, March 14, 1975.

[44]Ibid.

[45]Harrison and Ekman, p. 196.